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Square Pegs in Round Holes**GAO Sees
Army Goof
on Training**

The Army was accused in congressional testimony made public today of putting 35,000 soldiers in the wrong jobs and wasting more than \$48 million in training funds.

The charge was voiced during closed hearings of the House Defense Appropriations subcommittee headed by Rep. George Mahon (D., Tex.).

'MISMANAGEMENT'

Rep. Mahon confronted the Army with a General Accounting Office report blaming the situation on "a personnel management system that generates misassignments." He called it "a pretty serious indictment."

The congressman ticked off examples showing that some highly trained helicopter mechanics in Korea have been given jobs as lifeguards, dog handlers and company clerks.

At Ft. Leavenworth, Kan., Rep. Mahon said, a soldier who had 13 weeks of specialized training in aircraft maintenance was assigned as a military policeman.

"There kinds of examples have been presented in correspondence to members of Congress and in reports and so forth for a long time," he said, "but these abuses continue to exist."

DEFENSE

Lieut. Gen. James L. Richardson, Deputy Army Chief of Staff for Personnel, said any soldier who felt he was misassigned could write him personally "if he wants to."

Rep. Jamie L. Whitten (D.,

Miss.) doubted whether many would have the nerve to do that. Gen. Richardson replied they had the perfect right to go over their company commanders' heads.

The Army told the Congressmen there were 860,000 enlisted men on duty and it considered it had a pretty good record in assigning men to the proper jobs.

Shortages of certain skills sometimes made it necessary to switch men from the jobs in which they were trained to other tasks, the Army said.

PROTECTION

The Army also objected to the GAO report on grounds it represented only a projection of a sample check of 760 cases out of 18,600 soldiers in the Continental Army Command.

But these and other arguments didn't seem to impress Rep. Mahon and other members of his subcommittee.

"Congress is interested in saving money," Rep. Mahon snapped. "President Johnson is saying we have to pursue a program of frugality and efficiency, and yet we have this estimate of a \$48 million waste — \$48 million multiplied many times over adds up to a very considerable amount of money."

Rep. Mahon also said he couldn't understand why there appeared to be many more problems of misassignment in the Army than in the Navy and Air Force. The Army said perhaps one reason was that it is the only service using draftees.

(UPI)